

A F F I D A V I T

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

COUNTY OF MERCER, to-wit:

I, Seth A. Summers, being duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

1. I am a United States Postal Inspector employed with the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) since September 2012. I am presently assigned to the USPIS Charleston, WV domicile where my responsibilities include the investigation of crimes involving the United States Postal Service (USPS) and crimes furthered through the use of the U.S. Mail. This includes the investigation of controlled substances sent through the U.S. Mail. Prior to my employment with the USPIS, I was employed as a Special Agent and as a Uniformed Division Officer with the United States Secret Service for approximately eight (8) years, with assignments in Washington, D.C. and Charleston, WV. During the course of my law enforcement career, I have also investigated financial crimes, including mail fraud, wire fraud, bank fraud, money laundering, access device fraud, counterfeiting, and identity theft.

2. This affidavit is made in support of an application for a search warrant to search the contents of USPS Priority Mail Package bearing tracking number "9505 5128 5524 2164 6824 46" addressed to "Ices Prince 213 Vine St Beckley, WV 25801" and bearing a return address of "Ebay Store #1229A 1861 E. 1st Street

Mesa, AZ 85203" (hereinafter referred to as "SUBJECT PARCEL"). The SUBJECT PARCEL is a USPS Priority Mail Small Flat Rate Box. The SUBJECT PARCEL was mailed on June 13, 2022, from Mesa, Arizona with \$9.45 postage affixed. The SUBJECT PARCEL is currently located at 1000 Centre Way, South Charleston, WV 25309.

3. The information contained in this affidavit is based on information I have gained from my investigation, my personal observations, my training and experience, and information related to me by other law enforcement agents and witnesses.

4. Drug trafficking background gained over the years has shown that drug dealers and drug traffickers utilize the USPS for shipping controlled substances, including but not limited to cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, and pharmaceuticals. The use of Express Mail, Priority Mail and First Class Mail are favored because of the reliability, anonymity, speed (overnight service), minimal cost, and ability to track the mail piece.

5. Through experience gained in drug investigations by Postal Inspectors and other law enforcement agents, and through information provided by individuals who have been involved in buying, selling, and shipping drugs by Express Mail, Priority Mail and other types of shipments, the USPIS has established a drug profile policy to screen mail packages for controlled substances. The profile characteristics include peculiarities in labeling and unusual packaging techniques as well as other considerations. The

reason that handwritten labels are of interest is that the vast majority of premium mail services such as Express and Priority Mail involves business-to-business or business-to-person correspondence and features typewritten or computer-generated labels. Person-to-person correspondence (and the handwritten labels attendant thereto) accounts for a very small minority of total Express and Priority Mail traffic.

6. Postal Inspectors, Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other intelligence sources have identified Arizona, Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, New Jersey and New York as major source states for illegal drugs flowing into areas within the Southern District of West Virginia.

7. From my experience, training, and knowledge of drug shipments through the U.S. Mail, I am aware that drug traffickers frequently use fictitious names and addresses on the return address portion of the mailing label both to remain anonymous and avoid detection. Some return addresses have been found to be legitimate addresses, but the actual resident at those locations is either fictitious or non-existent. I am also aware that the address of the person that the mail piece is addressed to is generally not fictitious because a valid address is necessary for the package to be delivered. However, at times the true name of the addressee may

be altered or ignored in favor of an alias or code name to better disguise their identity from law enforcement.

8. Based upon my knowledge, training, and experience I know that drug traffickers using the USPS often use unusual packaging techniques. These may include excessive taping or wrapping or by including within the package items having strong odors in an effort to contain or mask the odor of controlled substances in order to avoid detection by trained narcotics dogs.

9. Your affiant knows based on training and experience as well as consultation with other agents, that U.S. Mail is often used by narcotic traffickers to transport controlled substances, as well as U.S. currency derived from the distribution of controlled substances, either as payment or proceeds. Your affiant knows based on training and experience that USPS Priority Mail and Express Mail are commonly used to transport controlled substances because narcotic traffickers can track the parcels, and control dispatch times and locations.

BACKGROUND OF INVESTIGATION

10. On June 14, 2022, while reviewing USPS electronic records relating to shipments of parcels from known source states to the Southern District of West Virginia, Postal Inspectors identified the USPS Priority Mail Package bearing tracking number "9505 5128 5524 2164 6824 46" addressed to "Ices Prince 213 Vine St Beckley, WV 25801" and bearing a return address of "Ebay Store

#1229A 1861 E. 1st Street Mesa, AZ 85203" (SUBJECT PARCEL). Based on my training and experience, your affiant believed the package to be consistent with the size, weight and mailing characteristics of packages containing illicit drugs.

11. On June 15, 2022, your affiant conducted a search of USPS business records and learned that the SUBJECT PARCEL had arrived at the USPS Charleston Processing and Distribution Center, South Charleston, WV. On June 15, 2022, your affiant went to the USPS Charleston Processing and Distribution Center, in South Charleston, WV, and noted, among other characteristics, that the SUBJECT PARCEL bore a typewritten or computer-generated label similar to that of a business-to-person correspondence, the postage affixed was purchased with cash, and was from Arizona, a source state for illicit drugs coming into the Southern District of West Virginia.

12. Your affiant made inquiries with CLEAR, an electronic database that has proven reliable in previous investigations in determining the legitimacy of name, address, and phone number information, regarding the return address of "Ebay Store #1229A 1861 E. 1st Street Mesa, AZ 85203". CLEAR showed no such business name associated with that address. Postal Inspectors also conducted a search regarding the destination address of "Ices Prince 213 Vine St Beckley, WV 25801". CLEAR showed no such name associated with that address.

13. On June 15, 2022, Detective Seth Johnson, Charleston Police Department, provided his trained narcotic detection dog, "Rex". Rex has experience with narcotics investigations including drug parcels and was last certified in April 2022. The SUBJECT PARCEL was placed in a line-up with four (4) additional boxes of various shapes and sizes. Rex conducted an exterior examination of all the parcels. Detective Johnson informed your affiant that Rex positively alerted on the SUBJECT PARCEL indicating the presence of the odor of a controlled substance.

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14. Based on the information contained herein, your affiant maintains there is probable cause to believe that the SUBJECT PARCEL - USPS Priority Mail Package bearing tracking number "9505 5128 5524 2164 6824 46" - contains controlled substances, and/or proceeds which are evidence thereof, and/or contraband, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1), 843(b) and 846.

Further your affiant sayeth naught.



SETH A. SUMMERS
POSTAL INSPECTOR

On the 15th Day of June 2022, this affidavit was sworn to by the affiant, who did no more than attest to its contents pursuant to Crim. R. 4.1 (b)(2)(A), by telephone after a document was transmitted by email, per Crim. R. 4.1.



OMAR J. ABOULHOSN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE